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ARRESTS MADE IN MULTI-COUNTY DRUG OPERATION

GREENBELT, Maryland - United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Allen F. Loucks announces that a federal grand jury has indicted the following defendants for crimes committed in connection with conspiracy to distribute cocaine and cocaine base:

Lester Fletcher, age 50, of Upper Marlboro, Maryland;
Brenda Fletcher, age 34, of Upper Marlboro, Maryland;
Fred Mitchell, age 36, of Upper Marlboro, Maryland;
Thomas Swinney, age 38, of Upper Marlboro, Maryland;
James Edwards, age 38, of Lanham, Maryland;
John Vincent Fletcher, Jr., age 60, of Upper Marlboro, Maryland;
Karen Richman, age 42, of Clinton, Maryland;
Kelly Hall, age 27, of Upper Marlboro, Maryland;
Donna Faulkner, age 37, of Upper Marlboro, Maryland;
Sterling Jennings, age 42, of Upper Marlboro, Maryland;
Anthony Rex Littleton, age 48, of Upper Marlboro, Maryland;
Wolfgang Oliver Gadson, age 50, of Brandywine, Maryland;
Dawn Taylor, age 40, of Brandywine, Maryland; and
Melissa Headley, age 36, of Upper Marlboro, Maryland.

The 2-count indictment, which was returned under seal on April 18, 2005 and unsealed today upon the arrests of the defendants, is the result of a two- year joint investigation by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and the Prince George's County Police Department into drug trafficking in Prince George's, Anne Arundel, Charles and Calvert counties. Count one alleges

that from about 2003 to April 2005, the defendants conspired to distribute and possess with intent to distribute 5 or more kilograms of a mixture containing cocaine, and 50 or more grams of a mixture containing crack cocaine. Count two alleges that on February 10, 2005 Brenda Fletcher possessed a semi-automatic pistol in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime. The Indictment also seeks forfeiture from the defendants of \$5 million, as well as property, including real estate and automobiles, obtained from the alleged drug trafficking scheme, or used to commit the commission of drug trafficking.

United States Attorney Allen F. Loucks stated that “These arrests bring to a close a significant drug operation that impacted Prince George’s, Charles, Anne Arundel and Calvert counties and emphasizes our commitment to eradicate such operations in Maryland.”

Special Agent in Charge Theresa Stoop, ATF Baltimore field office, stated that “No man, woman or child should have to live with this amount of violent crime in their community and neighborhood. We at ATF are committed, with our law enforcement partners, to rid the streets of guns and drugs. The arrests today should be a warning that we are here and will not quit until the streets are safe for everyone.”

"Two years of hard work by the members of the Prince George's County Police Department and Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, have resulted in the arrest and cessation of a significant drug operation impacting Prince George's County and a number of other Maryland counties. I applaud the fine work of all of the men and women involved", said Melvin C. High, Chief of Police, Prince George’s County Police Department.

Each of the defendants face a maximum sentence of life and a \$4 million fine under count one which alleges conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute cocaine and crack cocaine. Brenda Fletcher faces a minimum sentence of 5 years and a \$ 250,000 fine under count

two, which alleges possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime. The defendants are scheduled for their initial appearances today and tomorrow in Greenbelt before U.S. Magistrate Judge Connelly.

An indictment is not a finding of guilt. An individual charged by indictment is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at some later criminal proceedings.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys David I. Salem and Gina L. Simms.